

CHAPTEE XXVIII

REFUSAL TO BE A THIRD PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

IN 1916

IN March 1916, Eoosevelt went with his wife on a trip to the West Indies. The most devoted of his Progressive followers were pressing him forward as a Presidential candidate and he was firmly opposing their efforts, as he had no desire for another nomination. They were convinced that they could persuade the Republican leaders to nominate him by showing that he was the strongest possible candidate for them, the only one, in fact, that they could hope to elect.

He himself had no faith in the success of their efforts. "I do not belieye," he wrote to Julian Street on April 24, 1916, "there is any real chance of nominating me. I am just one of Abraham Lincoln's 'splashed and battered pioneers.' "

He insisted that no effort whatever should be made by his advocates to secure delegates for him for the Eepublican nomination, and no such effort was made. His advocates confined themselves to placing his merits as a candidate before the country and by arranging to hold a Progressive National Convention. On his way home from the West Indies he prepared for publication a statement of his position and it was telegraphed from Trinidad by Mr. Henry L. Stoddard, editor of the *New York Evening Mail*, who had gone there to meet him. In this statement, which he had written in his own hand for Mr. Stoddard, he said:

"I do not wish the nomination. I am not the least inter-

ested in the political fortunes either of myself
or any other
man.

"I am interested in awakening my fellow
countrymen to